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DEPARTMENT FOR DRL, CA/OCS, AND NEA/ELA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/06/2016
TAGS: PHUM PTER CASC KISL EG
SUBJECT: VISIT TO PRISONER NABIL SOLIMAN

REF: CAIRO 3969

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
William R. Stewart, for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Poloff conducted a human rights monitoring visit to prisoner Nabil Soliman on November 5. Returned by the U.S. to Egypt in June 2002, Soliman was subsequently convicted of membership in the Islamic Jihad, and sentenced to five years in prison. He is being held at the Istiqbal Prison, a subunit of a larger prison complex at Torah, 15 miles south of central Cairo. The prison warden and two officers from the Ministry of Interior attended poloff's meeting with Soliman. Poloff's last visit to Soliman was on June 26 (refftel).

¶2. (C) Unlike in previous visits, Soliman was agitated, and had visibly lost weight. Due to a recent escape attempt by three other prisoners, Soliman asserted that the entire prison population is being "collectively punished" with much stricter living conditions (i.e. cellblocks are in lockdown mode, no family visits permitted, no newspapers or radios permitted, no non-prison food allowed into the facility). While other prisoners were recently allowed to begin family visits again, Soliman has not, due to his October 31 attempt to smuggle a cellphone into the prison. Soliman claimed that since the prison turned down his request to use prison phones to call his Amcit children in the U.S., he tried to obtain a cellphone to do so (Note: Prison rules forbid cellphones. End note). Prison authorities discovered his unauthorized phone, and are punishing him by suspending his family visitation rights. Soliman previously obtained his food from his family during their visits (as he claims that prison food is "full of cockroaches and worms"), and so has announced a hunger strike to protest current prison conditions. As of November 5, his strike had been ongoing for 18 days, according to Soliman.

¶3. (C) When queried by poloff as to whether he has been tortured, Soliman said that he has not been physically abused in any way, but that "this situation itself is torture." He asked that a U.S. Embassy doctor visit him to conduct a medical exam, as he "does not feel right," and has no confidence in the prison medical staff. Soliman also requested that the Embassy request a visit to his cell, so that poloff can see for herself the "cruel, inhuman conditions" that he is forced to endure.

¶4. (C) Poloff has discussed Soliman's situation repeatedly with his wife Walaa, most recently on November 6. Embassy Cairo will continue to monitor Soliman's welfare and treatment in prison, through visits and communications with his wife and brother, Wael Soliman.

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